

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 24955

FOLLOWING MSG RCVD FROM CHIANG MAI 28 AUG, REPEATED FOR
YOUR ACTION/INFO

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHIANG MAI 324

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TH

SUBJECT: KRIANGSAK'S QUIET DINNER IN CHIANG MAI

SUMMARY: DURING HIS RECENT WEEKEND VISIT TO CHIANG MAI, KRIANG-
SAK ATTENDED A DINNER PARTY HOSTED BY CHIANG MAI BUSINESSMAN
KRAISRI NIMMANHAEMIND. THE GUEST LIST INCLUDED A SELECTED
GROUP OF BUSINESS LEADERS, A ROTARIAN, AN EDUCATOR, A YOUTH
LEADER, AND A TAMBON HEADMAN. THE DINNER WENT ON FOR MORE THAN
FOUR HOURS, DURING WHICH TIME KRIANGSAK DISCUSSED WITH
GUESTS A WIDE VARIETY OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS
FACING NORTHERN THAILAND AT THE PRESENT TIME. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING KRIANGSAK'S VISIT TO CHIANG MAI THIS LAST WEEKEND,
CHIANG MAI BUSINESSMAN KRAISRI NIMMANHEMIND HOSTED A QUIET,
INFORMAL DINNER PARTY AT HIS RESIDENCE. THE ARRANGEMENTS
HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY MADE BY THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF
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THAILAND, AN ASSOCIATION MADE UP OF THAI PRIVATE CITIZENS
AND A FEW FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN, ALL INTERESTED IN IMPROVING
THE INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC IMAGE OF THAILAND. THE COUNCIL
MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES THEH CHONJKHADIKIJ, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF
THE BANGKOK, AYUT ISSARSENA, AND KRAISRI NIMMANHAE-
MIND. AMONG THE FOREIGNERS IN THE GROUP ARE JACK BAILHE,
CASTO VECCHI, S. WOODROW SPONAUGLE, AND WALTER MEYER.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE DINNER PARTY WAS TO GIVE THE PRIME MINISTER A CHANCE TO SPEAK FREELY AND OFF-THE-RECORD WITH A SELECTED REPRESENTATION OF NORTHERN THAI CIVIC LEADERS. THE GUEST LIST INCLUDED TWO OF CHIANG MAI'S BEST KNOWN BUSINESSMEN, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LOCAL ROTARY CLUB, A FARM FEDERATION LEADER, A DEAN AT CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY, AND A KHAMNAN FROM A MORE REMOTE AREA OF CHIANG MAI PROVINCE.

3. THE DINNER PARTY WENT ON FOR ALMOST FIVE HOURS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER DISCUSSING A WIDE RANGE OF PROBLEMS FACING NORTHERN THAILAND. SUBJECTS COVERED INCLUDED THE DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING FUEL FOR TABACCO KILNS, THE NEED TO ENCOURAGE MORE LIGNITE MINING, FAILURES OF THE THAI MILITARY TO DEAL ADEQUATELY WITH THE INSURGENCY PROBLEM, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS IN THE NORTH, CORRUPT POLICE PRACTICES, PROBLEMS IN RICE AND CATTLE PRODUCTION, CRIME, TOURISM, AND THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE CASE INVOLVING FOUR AMERICAN MISSIONARIES ACCUSED OF ILLEGAL LOGGING.

4. IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE CONSUL, KRAISRI REPORTED THAT HE AND HIS GUESTS HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE SCOPE OF KNOWLEDGE DEMONSTRATED BY THE PRIME MINISTER DURING THE DISCUSSION AND HIS ABILITY TO SWITCH HIS ATTENTION
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BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN A WIDE VARIETY OF PROBLEMS. KRAISRI DESCRIBED THE PRIME MINISTER AS BEING SURPRISINGLY BROAD-MINDED FOR A MILITARY MAN. KRAISRI STATED, WHILE HE HAD MET THE PRIME MINISTER ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME HE HAD EVER HAD A CHANCE TO THOROUGHLY SOUND OUT THE PRIME MINISTER'S THINKING. WHILE KRAISRI IS STILL NOT COMPLETELY CONVINCED THAT KRIANGSAK IS THE MAN BEST CAPABLE OF LEADING THAILAND AT THIS TIME, HE WAS OBVIOUSLY IMPRESSED WITH HIS POLITICAL KNOW HOW DEMONSTRATED DURING THE COURSE OF THE DINNER CONVERSATION.

5. AS AN EFFORT OF PRIME MINISTER TO PEOPLE POLITICKING IN THE NORTH, THE DINNER PARTY APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A SUCCESS.

TANNER.

UNQUOTE

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